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The Communist Insurgency in the Philippines— A Baseline for Monitoring Developments

A Research Paper

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December 1987*

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The Communist Insurgency in the Philippines— A Baseline for Monitoring Developments

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A Research Paper

This paper was prepared by [] Office
of East Asian Analysis, with a contribution by []
[] Office of Global Issues. Comments and
queries are welcome and may be directed to the Chief,
Southeast Asia Division, OEA, []
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Scope Note

*Information available as
of 15 December 1987
was used in this report.*



This latest paper assesses the insurgency after what for the Communists has been almost two years of uncertainty and introspection since President Aquino came to power. It is intended to give policymakers a baseline against which to judge the ebb and flow of the insurgency and the impact of the government's counterinsurgency efforts.

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**The Communist Insurgency
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Summary

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and its New People's Army (NPA) grew rapidly during the final years of the Marcos regime, more than doubling in size from 8,000 to 17,000 insurgents between 1981 and 1986. This rapid growth slowed after "people power" swept Corazon Aquino into office in February 1986 and the Communists lost their principal agent for growth—Marcos. In urban areas, for example, the size of the CPP's legal mass organizations eroded as many party sympathizers took a wait-and-see attitude toward Aquino.

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Faced with a new political environment, the NPA has taken several steps to regain its lost momentum:

- It has adopted a more hardline, militant posture emphasizing armed struggle.

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- The NPA is attacking economic targets such as bridges, railways, and powerlines.
- The Communists are targeting Americans because of allegations of US meddling in Philippine politics and the delivery of US military assistance, and they were responsible for killing three American servicemen near Clark Airbase in October 1987.

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Although the intensity of the insurgency varies from region to region, the Communists' renewed vigor enables them to meaningfully challenge the government on several fronts:

- The CPP has established "shadow governments" in some rural areas that directly compete with the legitimate government at the local and regional levels.
- Communist assassination teams are attacking government officials, the military, and police in Manila and other urban areas, and have killed 120 such people in 1987.
- The Communists intend to participate in the local elections that will be held in January 1988.

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We will be watching selected indicators to monitor trends in the insurgency threat to the Aquino government. Key measures of progress in addition to expansion of armed strength and the number of people under Communist control include the election of members or sympathizers in the local elections and acquisition of foreign military support.

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Administrative Divisions

- 1 Ilocos Norte
- 2 Abra
- 3 Ilocos Sur
- 4 Mountain
- 5 La Union
- 6 Benquet
- 7 Pangasinan
- 8 Batanes
- 9 Kalinga-Apayao
- 10 Cagayan
- 11 Isabela
- 12 Ifugao
- 13 Nueva Vizcaya
- 14 Quirino
- 15 Zambales
- 16 Tarlac
- 17 Nueva Ecija
- 18 Pampanga
- 19 Bataan
- 20 Bulacan
- 21 Aurora
- 22 Rizal
- 23 Cavite
- 24 Laguna
- 25 Batangas
- 26 Quezon
- 27 Mindoro Occidental
- 28 Mindoro Oriental
- 29 Marinduque
- 30 Romblon
- 31 Palawan
- 32 Camarines Norte
- 33 Catanduanes
- 34 Camarines Sur
- 35 Albay
- 36 Sorsogon
- 37 Masbate
- 38 Antique
- 39 Aklan
- 40 Capiz
- 41 Iloilo
- 42 Negros Occidental
- 43 Negros Oriental
- 44 Cebu
- 45 Bohol
- 46 Siquijor

- 47 Northern Samar
48 Samar
49 Eastern Samar
50 Leyte
51 Southern Leyte
- 52 Zamboanga del Norte
53 Zamboanga del Sur
54 Basilan
55 Sulu
56 Tawitawi
- 57 Camiguin
58 Surigao del Norte
59 Misamis Occidental
60 Misamis Oriental
61 Agusan del Norte
62 Bukidnon
63 Agusan del Sur
- 64 Surigao del Sur
65 Davao Oriental
66 Davao
67 Davao del Sur
68 South Cotabato
- 69 Lanao del Norte
70 Lanao del Sur
71 Maguindanao
72 North Cotabato
73 Sultan Kudarat

Manila



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**The Communist Insurgency
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Dimensions of the Military Threat

Current Trends

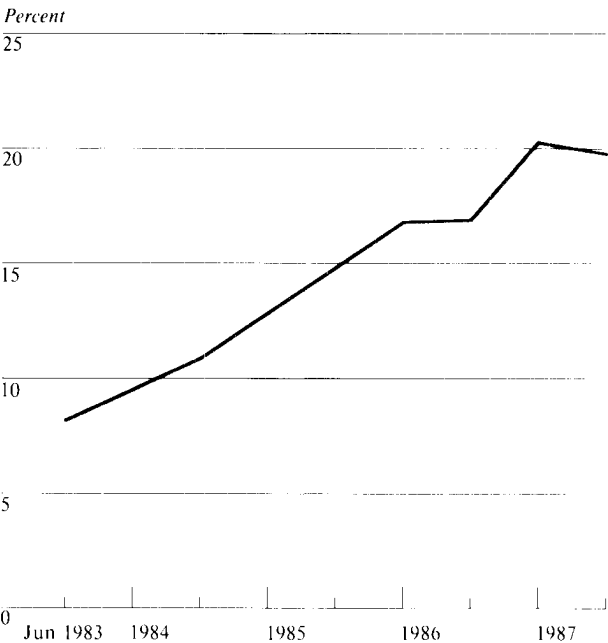
The Philippine Communist-led insurgency has continued to expand since February 1986 despite the “people power” that swept Corazon Aquino into the presidency. Although the insurgency’s growth has been slower than in the final years of the Marcos regime, the number of insurgents has increased since early 1986 by nearly 10 percent, to 17,000 full-time guerrillas, of which about 12,000 are armed with modern weapons.

the insurgents are capable of conducting aggressive and well-coordinated, small-scale military operations in nearly all of the country’s 73 provinces. These regular units are supported by an estimated 30,000 to 50,000 local guerrillas and village militia that operate in 63 guerrilla fronts.¹

Responding to the CPP’s Executive Committee decision in March 1987 to increase the armed struggle in rural areas, the NPA has stepped up attacks against the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), particularly arms-grabbing efforts, which appear to be the objective of most NPA operations. In addition, the NPA has increased assassinations in urban areas. During one two-week period in June 1987, for example, government officials attributed murders of 13 police and military officers in Metropolitan Manila to

¹ Only 62 of the fronts have been located.

**Figure 1
Growth of Communist Party of the Philippines’
Control of Barangays, June 1983 - June 1987**



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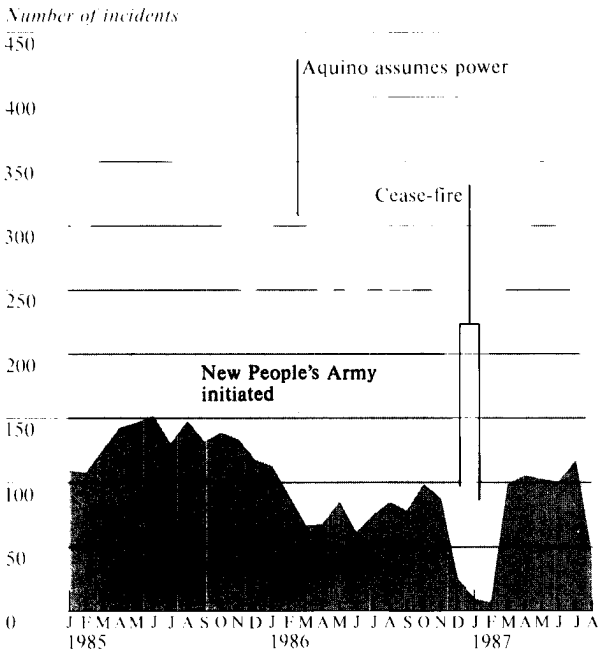
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NPA “sparrow” assassination teams. Although the intensity of the insurgency, as measured by the number of incidents and fatalities per month, has not reached the high levels of mid-1985, it is similar to the last months of the Marcos regime, when there were about 300 incidents and 325 fatalities a month.

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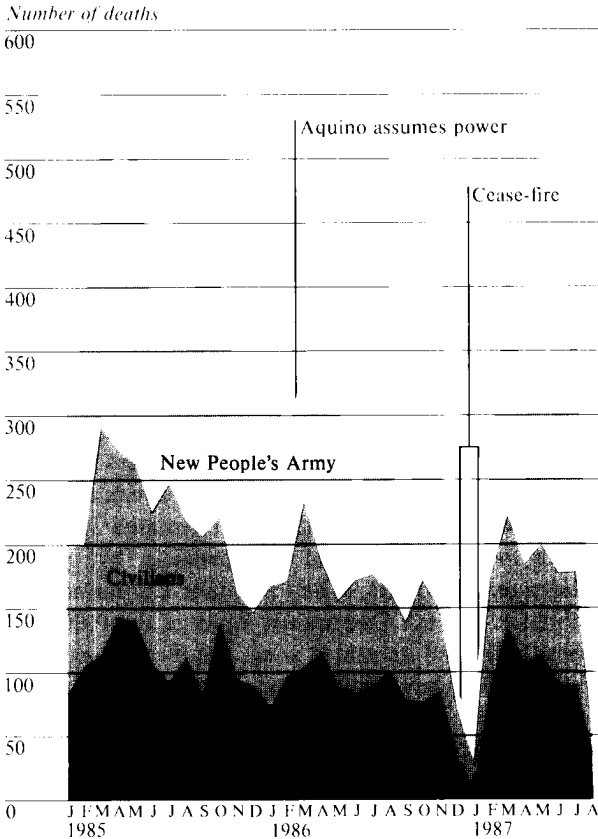
Figure 2
Violent Incidents Involving Philippine Communist Insurgents



A typical NPA operation is either a raid, an ambush, or a combination of the two. Raids are normally against small military outposts or townhalls in isolated villages. In the past several months the NPA has shown an increased ability to conduct coordinated raids on multiple targets such as the attacks on two bridges in Camarines Sur Province in the Bicol Region of Luzon and the Constabulary outposts in Quezon Province, adjacent to the Bicol.

Some of the most successful NPA operations in recent months have been raids against small, isolated outposts, often followed by ambushes of the reinforcing units. For example, 16 soldiers were killed in March in Quezon

Figure 3
Deaths Caused by Philippine Communist Insurgency



* Casualties include Integrated National Police and Civil Home Defense Forces.

Province when their truck was ambushed as they raced to relieve a Constabulary outpost under attack. So far, the NPA has mounted few operations against civilian targets, and those have generally been limited to companies that do not pay their "revolutionary" taxes. However, in early September the NPA attacked several electrical pylons on Luzon and

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damaged several bridges in the Bicol Region, which could indicate a change in tactics toward more economic targets. []

The Regional View

The growth and intensity of the insurgency vary from region to region, and among islands within regions. Diverse economic and political conditions and the extent of Aquino's popularity affect the Communists' exploitation of local social, political, and economic grievances. In addition, the ability of local officials to extract resources from the central government, and to provide services and security, greatly affects the success of the Communists, as has, of late, the emergence of civilian anti-Communist vigilante groups in some areas. No region of the country, however, is immune to the Communist threat.

[]

Luzon

[] the Aquino government and the CPP/NPA realize that this populous island is the key to the political and military struggle. The record of recent military incidents indicates that the NPA can mount attacks throughout the island but is concentrating on strengthening its position in the provinces near Manila. []

Central Luzon Region. Although infrequent fighting makes the insurgency appear insignificant in the Central Luzon Region, the CPP has emphasized political organizing in the area in preparation for later armed struggle. For example, []

[] the number of political cadres and armed NPA in Bataan has increased as well as has the openness of their proselytizing, and the Communist-dominated KMU labor union is attempting to organize labor at US military facilities in the Central Luzon Region. []

The NPA has strengthened its logistic network and support activities in provinces near Manila over the past year, particularly in areas south and east of the city, apparently as part of a long-range strategy to isolate the capital from the countryside. []

[] the NPA is establishing safe sites and training areas outside Manila that could be used to support urban terrorism. []

Bicol—NPA Stronghold. Bicol, the key transportation route between Manila and the southern islands, is one of the areas under the heaviest Communist influence. []

Recent unusual attacks against infrastructure targets such as bridges and powerlines suggest an NPA strategy of demonstrating its strength or of diverting AFP attention and resources away from Manila and Central Luzon. In Albay Province in the central Bicol Region, nearly two-thirds of the villages are reported to be controlled by Communists. Ambushes of military vehicles are a constant threat even on major roads, where guerrillas dressed in military uniforms operate roving checkpoints; political propaganda activities are widespread; farmers and businesses are forced to pay taxes to the NPA; and many local officials are under the control of the Communists. The Army has stationed approximately 4,500 troops in Bicol that have begun to increase patrols in rural areas to reassert government presence, but they have little effect on NPA operations. Moreover, the ineffective and corrupt local government undercuts gains made by the military, and the Communists, already entrenched by more than a decade of successfully exploiting economic discontent, continue to expand their influence even though the depressed coconut-based economy has improved over the past two years. []

Cagayan and Ilocos. NPA-initiated attacks increased over the past year in Cagayan and may have been meant to embarrass former Defense Minister Enrile by showing that he was unable to protect his home region. In much of Ilocos, the home area of former President Marcos, the NPA has moved out of its mountain strongholds and recruited more openly and in greater strength. Until last year Ilocos was unfruitful territory for Communist organizing because of the government's heavy spending there. Now, attacks by the NPA and a shortage of funds prevent provincial leaders from delivering services to remote villages and from countering Communist propaganda. []

Manila—The Threat of Urban Terror

Over the past 18 months the NPA has beefed up its support network to mount an urban terrorism campaign. [] the party's

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Special Operations Department since 1983 has built a supply and communications network in the city to support its specially trained “sparrow” urban guerrilla units. [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted] This year the NPA has launched a series of attacks that may have killed as many as 70 people, mostly police and military, in a show of capability. Moreover, [redacted]

[redacted]

Visayas

The insurgents have long operated out of strongholds on Samar, southern Leyte, Negros, and Panay, where, [redacted]

[redacted] they control

large areas. They have been less successful in Cebu and in northern Leyte, but evidence suggests that CPP/NPA operations there are on the rise. [redacted]

Negros—A Picture of Contrasts. In the depressed sugar-growing province of Negros Occidental, massive unemployment—estimated at well above the national rate of 11 percent—provides fertile ground for skilled Communist propaganda teams. They use a blend of teach-ins, rallies, and other proselytizing techniques to recruit youth into Communist ranks and encourage support from the population. The effort in Negros Occidental probably is the most sophisticated Communist political organizing work under way in the Philippines, and the local party committee appears to be giving it more priority there than the armed struggle. [redacted]

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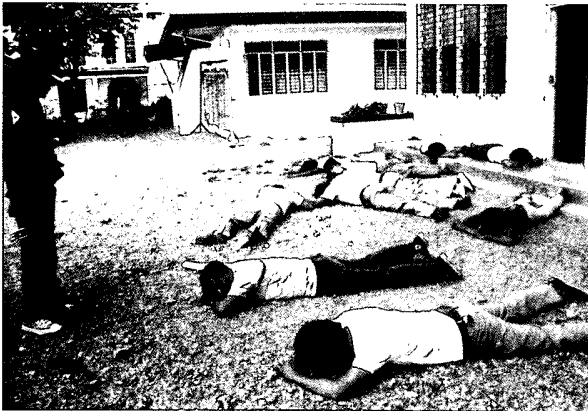


Figure 4. Disarmed police in Licab, Luzon, guarded by New People's Army (NPA) raider in Philippine Army shirt. [redacted]

On the other side of the island, in the province of Negros Oriental, the insurgency has made little progress, according to the US Embassy. The economy is stronger because agriculture is diversified and more farmers own land, and the military has taken aggressive actions against the Communists over the past several years. [redacted]

Panay—Failing Local Government. The island of Panay—with a diversified agricultural economy—has been under increasing Communist Party influence since the first party cadres arrived over a decade ago. The Embassy reports that in many areas the government's representation has been reduced to a hollow shell, and military commanders travel in armored personnel carriers. Manila and local governments have been hampered in their efforts to deliver much-needed food and health services because hundreds of armed guerrillas roam freely through villages. In addition, the NPA presence prevents local officials from collecting taxes, forcing some town governments to depend entirely on Manila to fund social services. [redacted]

Samar and Leyte—NPA Strongholds. In the eastern Visayas, Samar is a traditional insurgent hotspot. Small guerrilla units reportedly are returning to southern Leyte, a province the military claimed in 1984 was cleared of Communists. [redacted]

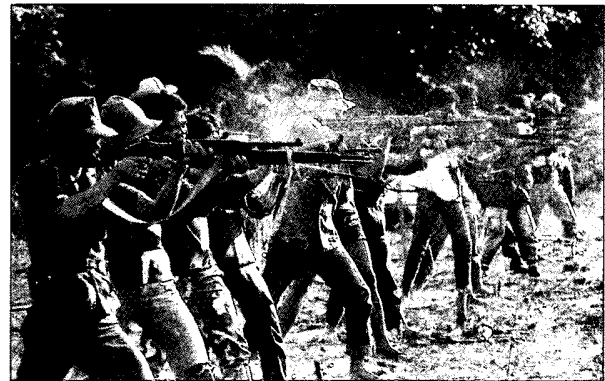


Figure 5. Rebels at Mindoro camp practice with live rounds. [redacted]

[redacted] about a third of the 4,400 villages are believed controlled by the insurgents. The Philippine military is concerned that the security situation will deteriorate further, particularly in northern Leyte where there have been increased sightings of armed Communist propaganda teams. However, [redacted] in some areas of Samar, the NPA is having problems maintaining support for its guerrillas. [redacted] food and ammunition shortages have surfaced as local citizen defense forces have formed to counter the insurgent threat. [redacted]

Cebu. Of all the major islands in the Visayas, Cebu is the least affected by the insurgency; less than 2 percent of the villages are controlled by the Communists. [redacted] and less than half of the island is organized into a Regional Party Commission. Economics and geography work against the NPA there. Cebu City's relative prosperity enhances the economy of the entire island; the deforested hills around the city provide little cover or concealment for the guerrillas; and the interior is sparsely populated and without enough agriculture to support large NPA operations. [redacted]

[redacted] the Communist [redacted]

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presence on the island is growing and urban guerrillas have become more active in Cebu City. Small NPA units also operate in the towns near Cebu City, and Communist-influenced labor unions have at times disrupted significant portions of the urban manufacturing economy. [REDACTED]

Mindanao

Mindanao, the country's second-largest island, is the island most seriously threatened by Communist insurgents. The insurgents have developed a formidable political base and effectively control large

areas. Government counterinsurgency efforts are complicated by a separate, centuries-old Muslim rebellion that flares often. So far, alliances between the Communists and the Muslims have been limited to the tactical level, and even those have broken down quickly. Nonetheless, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] NPA-Muslim cooperation is a great concern and the Philippine military would be hard pressed to contain both at the same time. [REDACTED]

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Figure 8. New People's Army (NPA) guerrillas train at camp in Mindoro. [redacted]



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[redacted] nearly half of all guerrilla fronts are located on Mindanao. They involve approximately 7,200 full-time insurgents, or 40 percent of the NPA's total strength—a sharp increase from Manila's estimate in 1982 of 2,500 guerrillas on the island. The Communist Party controls 25 percent of Mindanao's villages and nearly 40 percent of those in the southern part of the island.

[redacted] the CPP's influence had extended to as many as 90 percent of the districts of Davao—the Philippines' third-largest city—before the civilian anti-Communist organization Alsa Masa ("masses arise") began operating earlier this year. Now the Communists have been virtually eliminated as an active or visible force there. [redacted]

The insurgents make effective use of Mindanao's mountainous terrain and extensive forests—which cover nearly 40 percent of the island—in their guerrilla campaigns. Government forces, conversely, are hampered by a lack of air and road mobility. The military has only about 20 helicopters, for example, to ferry troops and supplies on an island the size of Virginia. [redacted]

Regional Communist Party commissions—acting as shadow governments—collect taxes, mete out revolutionary justice, and conduct propaganda activities.

[redacted] taxes collected from loggers, planters, farmers, and fishermen have made the Mindanao commission the best financed regional party. [redacted]

The growth of the Communists' influence, however, has not been without its problems. [redacted]

[redacted] Since 1986, the party has purged its local ranks, reportedly executing as many as 400 suspected agents. The discovery of mass graves received extensive local press attention and dealt the NPA's public image a severe blow, according to the US Embassy, and reduced insurgent morale. [redacted]

Some reporting also suggests that the NPA's strength in Mindanao has declined as a result of Aquino's rise to the presidency and her several visits to the island to rally support for the government and its programs. In addition, church and private-sector groups sponsor programs that provide land, job training, and financing to NPA guerrillas who surrender. [redacted]

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Figure 9. New People's Army (NPA) guerrillas practice maneuvers. [redacted]



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Nevertheless, the NPA remains a strong force and is capable of conducting battalion-size raids of 100 to 300 men. The Philippine military now has approximately 17,000 combat troops—about 40 percent of its combat forces—on the island. [redacted]

[redacted] however, the military is probably unable to decisively defeat the NPA there without additional equipment, training, and motivation. The situation will probably persist unless the island's potentially rich agricultural economy improves enough to undermine the appeal of the insurgency or the government implements a comprehensive counterinsurgency program to defeat it. [redacted]

within two years from its current "strategic defensive phase"² to the "strategic stalemate phase."³ Meeting the timetable requires that the NPA acquire greater quantities of high-powered firearms, antiarmor weapons, and better communications equipment. [redacted]

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Foreign Support—A New Factor Emerging?

[redacted] policy change resulted largely from an internal CPP assessment that the party cannot grow in size or capability without expanding the scope of the insurgency, providing weapons to unarmed NPA guerrillas, and countering increased counterinsurgency operations by the Philippine military. Moreover, the party's timetable, although flexible, anticipates moving

² The first of three phases in the party's concept of protracted warfare. This stage includes the launching of an armed struggle against the government by the CPP/NPA. In this stage the NPA is smaller and weaker in arms and manpower than the government, and small NPA units wage tactical attacks against small and isolated AFP units for the purpose of seizing weapons. The CPP/NPA divides this phase into three subphases: early substage, advanced substage, and strategic counteroffensive. [redacted]

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[redacted] The CPP/NPA believes that it is in the strategic counteroffensive stage. [redacted]

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³ The second phase of protracted warfare. According to CPP/NPA theory, it is reached when CPP/NPA forces become more or less equal to the AFP and neither side is capable of defeating the other. In this stage, the NPA will have large formations of Regular Mobile Forces, stable and extensive district bases in all principal islands, and district bases that occupy more than half of the countryside. [redacted]

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[redacted]
P'yongyang and Hanoi are the two likeliest candidates to provide military materiel to the NPA [redacted]

[redacted]
Only a few AK-47 assault rifles have been captured, and these are believed to be from a shipment of 100 sent by the Palestine Liberation Organization in 1981 as a gesture of goodwill [redacted]

Political Dimensions of the Threat

Since Aquino came to power the CPP has sought ways to regain its political momentum. The downfall of Marcos, who was the target of the CPP's propaganda and the rallying point for the activities of its disparate legal front groups and organizations and its illegal forces, removed the unifying symbol of leftist Philippine opposition groups and placed them in opposition to a very popular government. As a result, [redacted] membership in Communist-influenced mass organizations shrank from a high of 3.5 million in 1985 to about 1.4 million as of early 1987. [redacted]

In urban areas, the party's efforts to recoup and to strengthen its legal and illegal fronts—traditionally weak areas—have been complicated by the level of popular support for Aquino. Party documents, for example, make it clear that many potential middle-class sympathizers are waiting to determine whether Aquino or the party stands a better chance of implementing economic, political, and social policies that will benefit the middle class, according to the US Embassy. [redacted]

The Communists, despite their claims of having more than 2,900 party workers in Manila, have had little success with their stepped-up political organizing and propaganda work. In our view, their organization in Manila is the weakest link in the nationwide insurgency. [redacted]

[redacted] The Communists, for example, have organized effective labor strikes and other protests in the capital area but have not exploited the instability associated with the five coup attempts against the Aquino government. [redacted]

According to US Embassy reports, the party's attempts to expand links to labor federations and unions in Manila, as well as civic and professional organizations, have been only moderately successful, and party-sponsored rallies, cultural events, and lectures generally are not well attended. In addition, the many openly identified Communist front groups that operate in the capital are increasingly vulnerable to military penetration. The military and police are particularly sensitive to the Communists' attempts to infiltrate labor groups. According to the US Embassy, 10 percent of organized labor, for example, is in some way connected with Communist-backed unions. [redacted]

The complexity of the Communist political threat increased with the participation of its legal front party, the Partido ng Bayan, or People's Party (PNB), in the May Congressional election and the likely participation of the Communists in the local elections scheduled for January 1988. Since the PNB has become clearly identified with the CPP and because of its poor showing in the Congressional election—electing only two members to the House of Representatives—the Communists may run candidates for

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local elections through front groups other than the PNB. [redacted]

[redacted]

The Insurgents' Dilemmas

The strategy adjustments necessary to cope with the drastically changed political environment when Aquino assumed power have challenged the cohesion of the party's leadership. For at least six months after the establishment of the Aquino government, the CPP leadership was largely preoccupied with debating who was at fault for the decision to boycott the February 1986 presidential election, [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted] Although the party has not altered its main strategy to wage protracted warfare, the poor showing in the Congressional elections has led it to question the role of parliamentary struggle in the long-term strategy for seizing power. [redacted]

Targeting US Officials

The Communists claimed responsibility for killing three American servicemen near Clark Airbase on 28 October. A party spokesman said the killings were in

Filling the Vacuum

The expansion of the party's control in rural areas often results from government neglect. Front groups fill the vacuum where no local government exists, often through shadow governments, to provide services such as security, justice, health, education, and information. [redacted] the Communists' political structure is probably most developed in northern Luzon, Samar, and Mindanao. The Communist Party of the Philippine's (CPP) has been particularly adept at tailoring services to local needs. For example, in the Visayas, the CPP prints copies of its nationwide newspaper in the local dialects, the only newspaper to do so.

[redacted]

response to a CPP Executive Committee decision made in June 1987 to target Americans assisting Manila's counterinsurgency efforts. The party decided that the time was right to attack Americans because of recent deliveries of United States military aid and public allegations of US meddling in Philippine politics, [redacted]

[redacted]

If the Communists are convinced that the risk of retaliation by the United States is minimal, they may see valuable political and psychological gains in further assassinations. [redacted]

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NDF Recruitment

The National Democratic Front (NDF) focuses much of its effort on infiltrating and co-opting cause-oriented groups. Constituting most of the Philippine political left, these groups include human rights, legal aid, and church groups; labor, student, and teachers unions; and other professional organizations. [redacted]

Manila has a large proportion of the membership in the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and has traditionally been an area of heavy recruitment efforts. The NDF considers as a target of opportunity any group or aspect of society that may be dissatisfied with the government, particularly workers, peasants, students, ethnic groups, the church, and foreign aid groups. The NDF typically recruits its leadership from intellectuals, students, lawyers, clergy, journalists, labor, and government bureaucrats. [redacted]

Student and labor groups under NDF control regularly attempt to stir up actions that could attract supporters. The Kabataang Makabayan (KM) youth organization and the League of Filipino Students

(LFS), for example, organize street demonstrations, strikes, and rallies, and infiltrate related groups to recruit followers for the NDF. These groups also focus on protest themes in universities and then organize campus mass actions. [redacted]

Party cadres have penetrated legal organizations connected with the Catholic Church that obtain aid from foreign and domestic sources. This not only indirectly funds the party but also targets church members for NDF recruitment and even party membership. Liberation theology is used for possible revolutionary indoctrination and is propagandized by sympathetic priests and nuns. [redacted]

Another theme the NDF uses for recruitment includes playing on potential anti-US feelings. The US bases, which have consistently been an issue of domestic debate, are a key target for NDF propaganda. The NDF's antibases propaganda campaign is likely to intensify as Washington and Manila move toward negotiations on the bases in 1988. [redacted]

Civilian Anti-Communist Groups

The popularity and growth of civilian anti-Communist organizations have caused severe problems for the CPP/NPA, [redacted] The unexpected success of these groups caught the Communists offguard, and they have been slow to develop a counterstrategy. [redacted]

The most notable example of popular backlash to the guerrillas is in Davao City, a major urban center in Mindanao that, for all practical purposes, had been controlled by the Communists. The most prominent armed anti-Communist group, Alsa Masa, came into existence there, [redacted]

[redacted] after a half dozen people witnessed the execution [redacted] and took revenge by killing an NPA leader. Subsequently, with the support and encouragement of local government officials, the group became immensely popular among Davao residents weary of NPA terrorism and taxation. [redacted]

The well-publicized success of the armed Alsa Masa group in the Davao area, combined with increasing resentment of taxation and abuses by the Communist insurgents, has encouraged the spread of similar groups—both armed and unarmed. Just south of Davao, unarmed citizens have formed a group called NAKASAKA, the Philippine acronym for "People United for Peace," that alerts local security forces to insurgent activity. The group claims its activities have encouraged more than 2,000 Communist supporters to surrender and have cut off rebel tax collections. US Embassy officers report, after field visits, apparent broad-based support for NAKASAKA, and that the late Secretary of Local Government Ferrer had instructed officials throughout Mindanao to form similar groups. President Aquino has provided \$2.5

Alsa Masa

The Alsa Masa civilian defense organization, sometimes referred to by its detractors as vigilantes, has, at least for now, driven Communist guerrillas out of Davao, the Philippines' third-largest city. Since 1984, Davao had been virtually controlled by the Communists, who were carrying out several killings a day by 1985. Alsa Masa was formed in 1986 and now has 9,000 members—more than a third of them former insurgents—with many, if not most, armed. Its members conduct security patrols, identify Communist guerrillas, and are reported to carry out assassinations of suspected Communists. The local Philippine Constabulary commander oversees the organization and provides arms, and local businessmen donate funds. Although reported abuses have been few, some residents fear Alsa Masa may become a criminal gang if funding dries up or control breaks down.

The success of Alsa Masa is tied to several, possibly unique, factors that may not exist outside of Davao. By 1986, Davao's population was disillusioned by growing Communist taxation and arbitrary killings. Potential Alsa Masa ranks were also swelled by former insurgent guerrillas driven from the party by bloody internal purges in neighboring provinces. The local Constabulary commander proved adept at harnessing the popular groundswell and directed it effectively against the Communists. Moreover, he was not shackled by public relations concerns because Davao has traditionally had a "wild west" atmosphere relatively free from the critical scrutiny of the Manila and international presses. Although efforts are under way to form similar citizen self-defense groups outside Mindanao, such groups have not been as successful as the Alsa Masa.

million in additional economic development assistance to Davao del Sur Province for NAKASAKA's role in the counterinsurgency effort. [REDACTED]

According to the US Embassy, the Philippine military is considering organizing self-defense groups in Manila, especially to help ferret out Communist assassination teams that have become more active there.

Citizen watch groups also are appearing in the sugar-growing region of Negros and in Cebu. In addition, Tadtad, an anti-Communist religious cult known for its violence, has regained prominence in Cebu and Mindanao. [REDACTED]

Looking Ahead**The Communist's Short-Term Plans**

[REDACTED] The CPP, through the NDF, is intent on recapturing former supporters and allies who it believes are becoming disenchanted with Aquino's perceived move to the right. From the CPP's perspective, Aquino's actions since the August coup attempt, including removing two leftist advisers, declaring all-out war against the Communist insurgents, and her tough speech in October to the business community, are evidence of this shift in her government. Major issues we anticipate the CPP to exploit are the \$29 billion foreign debt, land reform, and the review of the future status of US bases. [REDACTED] the NDF is lobbying the Philippine Congress to repudiate all or part of the debt and to pass a radical land reform program—measures we doubt the Philippine Congress will pass. [REDACTED]

The NPA

[REDACTED] After the success of their operations in the Bicol against economic and infrastructure targets, they may conduct similar attacks in central Luzon. In addition, they may be planning to increase the level of violence in Manila and other urban areas, [REDACTED]

Indicators To Watch

The Philippine Government's success in countering the Communist insurgency will be measured more by the progress of its political and economic programs than by statistics on the size of the NPA and the number of people living in Communist-controlled areas. Among the lessons learned in several decades of

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The Counterinsurgency Effort

Civilian and military sectors of the government have been developing strategies for an overall counterinsurgency plan. Civilian government plans are for a rural development program that is intended to weaken the appeal of the insurgents. Coordinated by the National Economic Development Authority, it includes land reform, job training, infrastructure development, and amnesty and returnee programs. These are all on a limited scale, however, because of financial constraints.

Civilian planning is embryonic. The emerging plan is premised on rural economic development and close cooperation between local civilian and military officials with national supervision. Some attempts to coordinate and manage the counterinsurgency effort are being tried. For example, the government has formed a National Security Council, headed by Emmanuel Soriano, as the focal point for all plans, but it lacks a staff and authority. The Philippine Constabulary and the Integrated National Police may be transferred out of the Defense Department to the not-yet-created Department of Public Safety, according to the newly adopted Constitution, which could enhance their credibility and make them more useful in local policing efforts. President Aquino has also formed the National Reconciliation and Development Council, which will implement her offers for amnesty and returnee programs.

The military, because of differing points of view among its leadership, has not agreed on the elements of a coordinated strategy.

Without a clear-cut strategy, the AFP is mounting unproductive, limited offensives where there are known guerrilla strongholds or where the NPA is known to be planning strikes. We believe these operations are unsuccessful because the tactics are inappropriate for counterinsurgency at this stage and the NPA has advanced warning and slips away.

Overall, the AFP does not have enough forces to carry out a simultaneous nationwide counterinsurgency plan. Furthermore, forces are spread out in a fashion that does not necessarily reflect the threat to a particular region. For example, the force ratio in Manila of about 36:1 is grossly disproportionate to the level of NPA threat there, while in the NPA-infiltrated Bicol the ratio is 2:1.

insurgencies are, we believe, that statistics tend to be unreliable indicators of citizens' loyalty to the government and country or of the warring sides' control over people and territory.

Over the near term, discrete events as they occur or not are likely to be better indicators than statistics of the insurgency. For example, the following would suggest that the counterinsurgency is going in the government's favor:

- Military
 - Increased foreign assistance for the AFP.
 - Improved training, discipline, and leadership.
 - More aggressive military operations.
 - Use of unconventional tactics by the AFP.

- Political
 - Improved civilian-military relations.
 - Unified management of counterinsurgency programs.
 - Congressional priority and funding for the counterinsurgency.
 - Honest local elections.

- Economic
 - Solid rural development results.
 - Increased foreign investment.
 - Equitable and efficient land reform.
 - Rising prices for commodity exports.

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Of course, the converse of these events would work to the insurgents' advantage, but we will also be looking at specific indicators from the CPP's perspective:

- **Military**
 - Muslim insurgency picks up.
 - NPA and Muslim insurgents form military alliance.
 - Encounters with the AFP consistently favor NPA.
 - NPA receives significant military aid from abroad.
- **Political**
 - CPP gains belligerency status.
 - Real or fronted CPP success in local elections.
 - Policy debates among CPP leadership are resolved.
 - CPP develops formal and close relations with foreign governments and parties.
- **Economic**
 - Widespread graft and corruption evident in Philippine Government.
 - CPP/NPA taxation and confiscation increase.

The most important indicators for monitoring the Communists are the receipt of significant military assistance from abroad and their level of success in the local elections. Large amounts of military assistance would easily tip the balance in favor of the NPA, while success in the local elections will improve their ability to control areas of the countryside. For the government, improved civilian-military relations and unified management of the counterinsurgency program are the most important indicators. Without both, the other indicators are unlikely to occur or have little effect and the Communists will continue to gain ground.

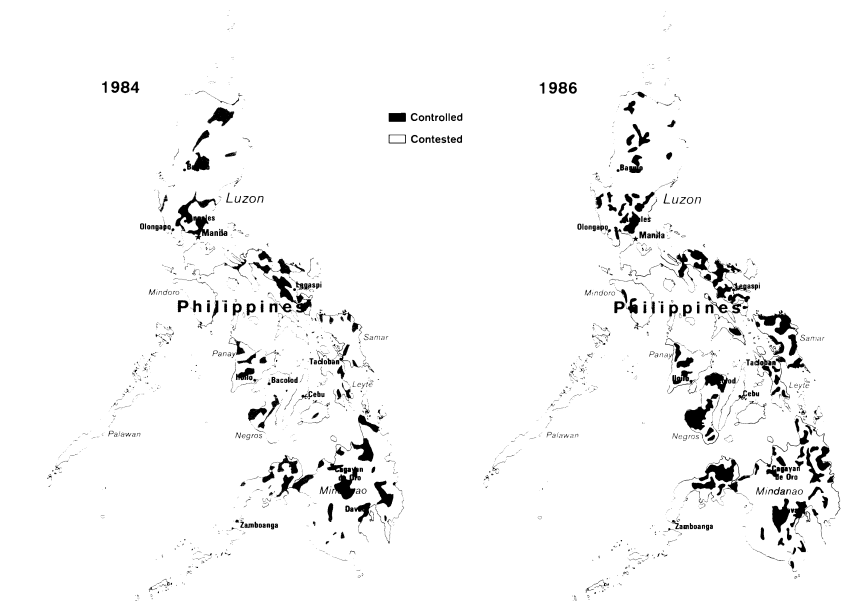
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Figure 10
Communist Party of the Philippines/New People's Army (CPP/NPA) Operating Areas



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Figure 11
Guerrilla Front Boundaries

- / I Commission (first level)
 — / A Regional/Provincial Committee/Front (second level)
 — / 6 Front (third level)
 - - - / a Local Committee (fourth level)

0 50 100 150 Kilometers
 0 50 100 150 Miles

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Northern Luzon Commission (NLC)

A NLC Provincial Committee/Front

- 1 Supra Party Commission - SPC DIZON
 - a Ilocos Norte Committee (INC)
 - b Komiteng Larangan Silangang-Cagayan (KLSG)
 - c Komiteng Larangan Cagayan-Apayao (KLCA)
- 2 Supra Party Commission - SPC LOPEZ
 - d Komite Sa Silangang Larangan (KSL)
 - e Komite Sa Kanlurang Larangan (KKL)
- 3 Supra Party Commission - SPC OPLE
- 4 Isabela Provincial Party Committee (IPPC)
- 5 Ilocos Strip Provincial Party Committee (ISPPC)

Central Luzon Commission (CLC)

B CLC Provincial Committee/Front

- 6 Provincial Party Committee - PPC ITEMCOOP
- 7 Provincial Party Committee - PPC ATLAS
- 8 Provincial Party Committee - PPC PHELPS
- 9 Provincial Party Committee - PPC PICOP
- 10 Provincial Party Committee - PPC FILIPPO

Southern Luzon Commission (SLC)

C Southern Tagalog Regional Party Committee (STRPC)

D Mindoro Island Party Committee (MIPC)

E Bicol Regional Party Committee (BRPC)

11. Kamipitan
12. Kamagong
13. Romulo Jaliores (RJ)
14. Camel

Visayas Commission (VISCOM)

F Panay Island Regional Party Committee (PIRPC)

- 15 Northern Front
- 16 Southern Front
- 17 Central Front
- 18 Eastern Front

G Negros Island Regional Party Committee (NIRPC)

- 19 Northern Negros Front - America
- 20 Central Negros Front - Europa
- 21 South Western Negros Front - Asia
- 22 South Eastern Negros Front - Africa
- H Cebu Provincial Party Commission (CPPC)
- 23 Spain
- 24 Special District Committee
- 25 Nicaragua

J Bohol Provincial Party Commission (BPPC)

- 26 DC 1
- 27 DC 2
- 28 DC 3

K Samar Island Regional Party Committee (SIRPC)

- 29 First Fighting Front
- 30 Second Fighting Front
- 31 Third Fighting Front

L Leyte Island Regional Party Committee (LIRPC)

- 32 Northern Leyte Fighting Front
- 33 Southern Leyte Fighting Front

Mindanao Commission (KOMMID)

M Northeastern Mindanao Regional Party Committee (NEMRPC)

- 34 Front 8
- 35 Front 14
- 36 Front 16
- 37 Front 19
- 38 Front 21
- 39 Front KDM - KADUMAAN

N North Central Mindanao Regional Party Committee (NCMRPC)

- 40 Front 4
- 41 Front 6
- 42 Front 12

O Western Mindanao Regional Party Commission (WMRC) - SERBO

- 43 Front G
- 44 Front D
- 45 Front A

P Western Mindanao Regional Party Commission (WMRC) - SIERRA

- 46 ARMA
- 47 AMORES
- 48 JVISIS
- 49 Front 13

Q Southeastern Mindanao Regional Party Committee (SEMRPC)

- 50 Front 2
- 51 Front 27
- 52 Front 3
- 53 Front 23
- 54 Front 15
- 55 Front 18

R Southern Mindanao Regional Party Committee (SMRPC)

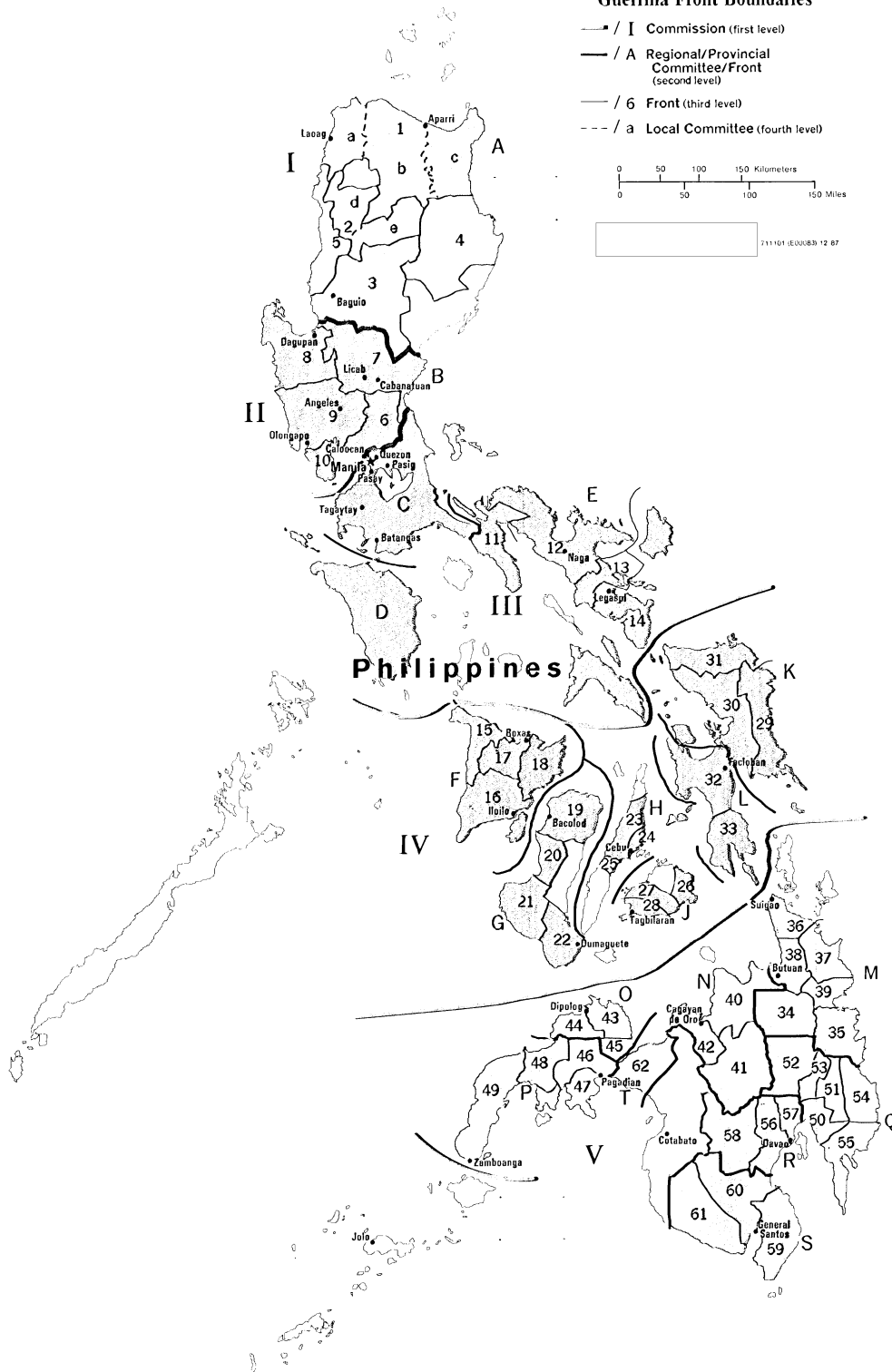
- 56 Front 51
- 57 Front 52
- 58 Front 53

S Far South Mindanao Regional Party Committee (FSMRPC)

- 59 Front 71
- 60 Front 72
- 61 Front 73

T Lanao Norte-Lanao Sur Regional Party Committee (LNLSPC)

- 62 Front 17



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